

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) An interface apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ for providing information ~~in~~ as a response to a query ~~[[on]]~~ of a virtual database table, the interface apparatus,

~~the virtual database table appearing to have one or more rows, each row having one or more fields, the query including a field name of the named fields and an indication of a manner of selecting a row of the rows, and the apparatus comprising:~~

a virtual database service, the virtual database service comprising the virtual database table, wherein the virtual database table comprises one or more rows, each of the one or more rows comprising one or more fields; and

an information source for the information to be provided in response to the query, the query comprising a field name and an indication of manner for selecting a row,

wherein the virtual database service is configured to receiving ~~receive~~ the query, respond ~~responding~~ to the field name and the indication of the manner ~~[[of]]~~ for selecting a row as required to obtain the information to be provided from the information source, and providing the information as ~~[[the]]~~ a value of the field indicated by the field name in the selected row, in response to ~~whereby the apparatus presents the virtual database table to a source of the query.~~

2. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of ~~set forth in~~ claim 1, wherein~~[[:]]~~ the indication of ~~[[a]]~~ the manner of selecting a row comprises ~~includes~~ a selection value~~[[:]]~~ and the information source provides at least one ~~[[a]]~~ component of the information to be provided in response to a match between the selection value and a pattern that matches a plurality of values and is accessible to the information source.

3. (currently amended) The interface apparatus ~~of set forth in~~ claim 1, wherein:  
the query is an SQL query addressing the virtual database table;  
the field name is contained in a SELECT clause in the query; and  
the indication of the manner of selecting a row is contained in a WHERE clause  
in the query.

4. (currently amended) The interface apparatus ~~of set forth in~~ claim 1, wherein:  
the information source comprises ~~[[is]]~~ an access evaluator, the access evaluator  
configured to determine ~~which determines~~ whether a user may have access to an  
information resource within the information source;  
the manner of selecting ~~[[the]]~~ a row comprises ~~includes~~ information identifying  
the information resource within the information source and from which the user seeking  
access to ~~[[and]]~~ the information resource ~~may be determined~~; and  
the provided information in response to the query comprises ~~includes~~ an  
indication of whether the identified user ~~determined from the information~~ may access  
the information resource ~~determined therefrom~~.

5. (currently amended) The interface apparatus ~~of set forth in~~ claim 4, wherein:  
the access evaluator determines whether the user may have access to the  
information resource by considering one or more access policies, each access policy  
indicating whether a user group may have access to a set of information resources, the  
access evaluator configured to allow ~~[[and]]~~ access by the user to the information  
resource ~~being allowed~~ when the one or more access policies for the user groups to  
which the user belongs permit access to ~~[[and]]~~ the sets of information resources to  
which the information resource belongs ~~so indicate~~; and  
the manner of selecting ~~[[the]]~~ a row comprises ~~contains~~ membership  
information about the user from which membership of the user in a user group may be  
determined.

6. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 5, wherein~~[[:]]~~ the access evaluator uses the membership information to determine membership of the user in a user group.

7. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 6, wherein:

the access evaluator determines that the user's membership in the ~~there may be a~~ user group ~~such that membership in the user group would give~~ permits the user access to the information resource; and

the provided information in response to the query further indicates a method of providing further information about the user in a further query from which the user's membership in ~~[[the]]~~ a user group can be determined.

8. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 7, wherein~~[[:]]~~ the further information comprises ~~includes~~ authentication information that ~~which~~ may be used to validate the user's identity.

9. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 8, further comprising~~[[:]]~~ an additional information source configured for use as ~~that is an~~ authenticator, wherein the ~~authenticator using the authentication information is used~~ to validate the user's identity.

10. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 9, wherein~~[[: the]]~~ a response to the further query provides an indication whether the user's identity is valid with regard to accessing an information resource.

11. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 5, further comprising:

an additional information source configured for use as ~~that is~~ a user profile information source that ~~which~~ provides additional information about the user, wherein ~~[[;]]~~ the additional information about the user comprises ~~includes~~ a user information retrieval method specification that specifies how the user profile information source provides the additional information~~[[; and]]~~ , and wherein the access evaluator considers ~~uses~~ at least some portion of the additional information to determine membership of the user in the user group.

12. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 5, further comprising:

an additional information source configured for use as ~~that is~~ an authenticator that ~~which~~ validates the identity of the user through use of the membership information, wherein the access evaluator determines membership of the user in a user group only after the authenticator has validated the user's identity ;

~~the authenticator uses the membership information to validate the identity of the user; and~~

~~the access evaluator determines membership of the user in a user group only after the authenticator has validated the user's identity.~~

13. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 4, further comprising:

an additional information source configured for use as that is an authenticator that which validates an identity of the user through the use of authentication information in the indication of a manner of selecting a row, wherein the provided information in response to the query is obtained at least in part from the authenticator, the provided information comprising an indication of whether the user's identity is valid ;

~~the manner of selecting the row includes authentication information which the authenticator uses to validate the user's identity; and~~

~~the provided information is obtained at least in part from the authenticator and includes an indication of whether the user's identity is valid.~~

14. (currently amended) The interface apparatus of set forth in claim 4, further comprising:

an additional information source configured for use as that is a user profile information source that which provides additional information about the user through the use of profile information gathering information that indicates to the profile information source how to gather the profile information, wherein the indication of the manner for selecting a row comprises the profile information gathering information, wherein the provided information in response to the query is obtained at least in part from the profile information source, the provided information comprising the profile information ;

~~the manner of selecting the row includes profile information gathering information which indicates to the profile information source how to gather the profile information; and~~

~~the provided information is obtained at least in part from the profile information source and includes the profile information.~~